



News

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SBA Names Young Entrepreneur of the Year from Helena

HELENA, MT – Ryan Deskins, owner of R&R Pressure Washing of Helena, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2004 Montana SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Deskins will be recognized at SBA's annual Small Business Week awards ceremony on May 7, 2004, at Missoula's Doubletree Inn, along with a cast of outstanding small business owners and advocates from across the state.

Ryan Deskins was born in Tacoma, Washington January 23, 1976, and graduated in 1999 from MSU-Northern with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Diesel Technology. General Electric recruited and hired Deskins right out of college as a technical advisor to the Union Pacific Railroad in North Platte, Nebraska. The job was fast paced and very stressful, but Deskins worked hard and excelled. The stress eventually took its toll and his family began to pay the price. Deskins decided to give up his good job and relocated his family to Helena, MT. His wife, Rachelle landed a job with the State of Montana shortly after arriving in Helena and Ryan got a job as a traveling Diesel Mechanic for Mergenthaler Transfer & Storage. Deskins though was an entrepreneur at heart and had thoughts of owning a business. There were two things stopping him – finding the right business opportunity and a lack of money.

One day while driving around town, Deskins happened upon some people washing semi-trucks. It was apparent the individuals were not interested in doing the job and they weren't very good at it either. So, he decided to do some research on contract cleaning businesses. After a month of checking out the competition in town and the market growth potential for this type of business, Deskins decided to go for it. He borrowed \$4,300 from his line of credit, bought a used steam cleaner and set out on his new part-time venture. He already owned a trailer, so the only other items he needed were a water tank, some brushes and soap. After knocking on one door after another trying to land a cleaning job, Deskins finally got the break he needed from the foreman at Watkins & Shepard Trucking. Deskins had actually never washed a semi truck before and wasn't even quite sure where to begin. He set the world record for the longest truck ever washed – 1 hour and 45 minutes! Over the course of the next year, he got faster and faster, constantly refining the washing process, both scientifically and systematically. As a result, he became very efficient.

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In June 2002, Deskins decided to quit his job at Mergenthaler's to go full time washing. The first month or two were tight, but business began to pick up. He hired one full-time employee and forged ahead, picking up several other major accounts. As winter was approaching things began to fall into place. He hired another full-time employee in November and now with two full-time employees, Deskins could devote his time to finding more work for the company.

What began with a very small investment and a lot of hard work, ingenuity, motivation and determination has today evolved into R&R Pressure Washing being the largest contract cleaning company in Helena, with only one remaining competitor. The company now has five full-time employees, four steam cleaners, three trucks, two trailers and a Type 6 Wildland Fire engine.

Deskins was nominated by Dianne Wiseman of Edward Jones in Helena. Other award winners being honored include: William Woody of Nightingale Nursing Services, Inc. of Missoula – Montana Small Business Person of the Year; Jack Morgenstern of Century Companies, Inc. of Lewistown – First Runner-up Small Business Person of the Year; Jennifer Keck of Big Sky Travel Nurses, Inc. in Conrad – Woman owned Business of the Year; Frederick “Rick” Larson of Employee Benefit management Services, Inc. – Entrepreneurial Success Award; Kim Wild of TowHaul Corporation, dba Smith Equipment USA of Belgrade – National Small Business Exporter of the Year; Mandi Luce-Heinle and Sarah Ann Hamlen of Innovative Marketing Solutions, LLC of Hathaway – Main Street Business of the Year; Jerry Sullivan of Flint Creek Valley Bank in Philipsburg – Financial Services Advocate of the Year; Sheryle Shandy of Billings Food Bank & Montana Harvest Kitchens/Montana Harvest Gift Boutique in Billings – Home-Based Business Advocate of the Year; Flathead Business Journal of Kalispell – Small Business Journalist of the Year; Craig Smith of Fort Peck Community College in Poplar – Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year; Joe Fletcher of the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center – Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year; and Joy Ott of Wells Fargo Bank Montana, N.A. in Billings – Women in Business Advocate of the Year.

For more information on SBA programs and services, contact the Montana SBA District office at (406) 441-1081 or log onto www.sba.gov/mt.

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